



number 13

Apa L #38

8 july 1965

## OVER THE HILL

El Cerrito, Friday, 2 July 1965, 0330 hours

The Santa Fe railroad goes almost everywhere in the southwest, except Santa Fe. And one sees its rumbling commerce-laden trains, or their iron spoor, straining up mountain grades in New Mexico, plodding by the Painted Desert and the Petrified Forest in Arizona, and daintily skirting the edge of the restless Pacific at San Clemente and the coast of southern California.

In the East Bay, its ancient ironwork puts a bump, or a hump, in almost every road up the hill from the shore. The track comes out of Oakland and, for a time, slices Berkeley's Sacramento street in half, and goes arrogantly down the middle, as if its locomotives imagine themselves to be trucks or automobiles. Just above Russell street, the rails angle westward and from then on north, till they disappear into the wilds of Richmond, they roughly parallel San Pablo avenue, the main north-south surface street in these parts.

There are miles of iron along this route, and scores of crossings, unprotected by more than swinging semaphores, flashing red lights, and clanging bells. One who lies awake at night can hear, above the distant rumble of trucks on the Eastshore freeway, which throbs up in the quiet with the persistence of a dentist's drill, the progression of trains across Berkeley, Albany, El Cerrito, Richmond. At each crossing the engineer blares out a subdued, raucous warning on the horn. Trains these days are not equipped with whistles that sound "like the scream of a hawk sailing over some farmer's yard." The horn on the Santa Fe trains that cross the East Bay area resembles the cry of a laryngitic duck. One can hear it a long way off, at Cedar street, perhaps: honk honk! Hopkins street: honk honk! It is very dim at first, but grows louder and more penetrating as the distance narrows. Marin avenue: honk honk! Solano avenue: honk HONK! Till at Fairmount, perhaps, or Central, or Lincoln, one can hear the rattle and click of the cars on the rails as a background to the horn, coming closer: Eureka: HONK HONK! Stockton: HONK HONK! Moeser: HONK HONK!

The clamor of the horn every half minute, the click of the cars, and the beat of crossing bells grows dimmer as the train proceeds into Richmond, till the honk honk! is only a tiny pip of sound against the far-off roar of the freeway, which goes on forever.

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Griffith Planetarium: Planets and stars in clever plastic skies.

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LETTER FROM AN OUTSIDE OBSERVER

Mr Jack Harness (Jackess?), Gallant Gallstone XXXVI, Dear Sir:

I will thank you not to misspell my name in the future, nor hybridize it with that of Redd Boggs. Boggs writes all his own stuff without help from me. As Boggs had been in fandom for 25 centuries before I was ever heard of, I think you have adequate published proof of the fact. Do rest assured that whatever I write will have my name on it. Shall I ask my mother to send you a note on the correct spelling and derivation of my given name and our family name?

GRETCHEN SCHWENN

ALL THE TRUMPETS OF THE SKY

One of the many pleasures of southern California living -- to some extent available in the slightly brisker climate of the Bay area as well -- is that of wandering forth in shirtsleeves in the mild sun of mid-January without experiencing the smallest chill. I don't have much nostalgia for Minnesota winters; I experienced too many bitter winters in Minnesota. As Bjo pointed out in Apa L distribution 32, snow is lovely for a brief while, but who wants a whole season of snow, cold, and ice?

The high country of New Mexico is an ideal place in which to enjoy real snow and winter weather. Snow plummets down in earnest for a brief while on a few days in winter, but the sun comes out and the snow is gone before it becomes an annoyance and a bore. It shines in quiet beauty on the Sandia mountains high above Albuquerque when the streets below are full of sunshine and warmth.

I remember approaching Santa Fe in early afternoon last 30 December, having motored up from Albuquerque behind the Sandias on the Madrid road. We emerged from one vast mountain range to be confronted by the majestic wall of the Sangre de Cristo range, which looms like a theater backdrop to the north of Santa Fe. The Sangre de Cristos, belying their name, were blue under mighty, plunging stormclouds, which rolled over those tall peaks like surf over offshore rocks at Big Sur. The lofty battlements, soaring up 13,000 feet, seemed frozen in silent torment: toppling, massive, mysterious, remote, luminescent in a dozen intense shades of sky and distance. Snow thundered down on them, flake by pelt-ing flake, from the tons of sullen cloud. That is the way to experience winter: as a drama of nature, viewed from a far-off vantage point.

ADIEU, ADIEU, KIND FRIENDS, ADIEU, YES -- OOPS!

This issue of Spirochete, #13, was mooted, as Donald Tuck would say, to be the last of the present series. What better number to quit on than cursed number 13? But I still have a number of unpublished articles that I wish to use in Apa L. Therefore, till I use up this slag heap of material, I will continue to issue Spirochete. Two or perhaps three more issues should do it, I think.

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Fans have faith in  
Spirochete  
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*Some  
copies  
for the  
living*